



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

ART. IV. — CAUSES OF THE COMMUNE.

THE remote and indirect causes of the insurrection of March 18th, 1871, are well known. Students of French history may differ in matters of detail, but all agree that two conspiracies against order have long existed in France, — a political conspiracy, whose members, though sufficiently divided in opinion to keep the fires of the Revolution of 1793 alive on all its altars, yet united to serve Fouché in 1815, and to plot with Blanqui and Delescluze against Charles X., Louis Philippe, the Republic of 1848, and the Second Empire, in succession ; and a social conspiracy, springing from the loins of St. Simon, Babœuf, and Fourier, mastered by Cavaignac in 1848, and kept in subjection by Napoleon III. until the capitulation of Sedan. For more than half a century, conspirators, whether political or social, dreamed of possessing Paris, but awoke in dungeons or in exile.

In 1871, Paris was theirs, and France might be. The city was not only in their possession, it was their accomplice. This is the fact that requires explanation. "People judge wrongly," says Jules Favre, "who think that there is in Socialism, in the action of the International [and the same can be said of Jacobinism], a very powerful force, capable of producing events like that of the 18th of March. Socialist ideas and the action of the International were, as regards that event, like a pinch of powder thrown into a conflagration. The fire was already lighted ; its physiognomy alone was changed by the powder, which by itself would have had no effect."

What, then, did cause the conflagration ?

The answer to this question is to be found in the volume of testimony (from which the above is quoted) taken before a committee of the National Assembly appointed to investigate the "causes of the 18th of March." The book contains much extraneous matter, witnesses telling what they have heard from others, and what they have evolved from their own consciousness, and often seasoning their facts with personal malice : but though raw material, it is the material of history, being furnished by Thiers and McMahon ; by the members of

the "Government of National Defence"; by officers of the line, and of the National Guard; by members of the police force during and since the Empire; by the Mayors, and their assistants, who played no small part in events; by members of the International Society, in its better days; by intelligent citizens, bankers, "able editors"; by most of those, in short, worth listening to, always excepting the Communists themselves, who are heard, when heard at all, at second-hand. Out of the mouths of so many competent witnesses the truth must sometimes escape. It is more likely to come from a Frenchman's mouth than from his pen, and is therefore more likely to be found in a volume of testimony taken down by stenographers, than in the elaborate works with which the actors in the melodramatic tragedy of 1870-71 have pursued the public. Faith can, at least, be given to witnesses where their evidence goes against themselves or against a government of which they formed part; and it is with the aid of such witnesses that I shall show upon what grounds is based my belief that — whatever might or might not have happened under other circumstances — what did happen is directly attributable to the government which succeeded the Empire, — if the thing instituted by the gentlemen who profited by Sedan can be called a government.

With the fall of Napoleon, the principle of cohesion among the opponents of the established order of things disappeared. The conspirators, whether would-be Terrorists, or would-be Socialists, were weakened in numbers, crippled in resources, and forced to echo the patriotic cry of *Lutte à outrance*. The Blanquist organ sought subscribers under the popular title of "The Country in Danger"; the International Society was for weeks without an organ, and its leading members complained * to each other that the siege had scattered their forces, that the treasury was empty, and that complete reorganization was the prerequisite to effective action.

The members of the "Government of National Defence" labored, it is true, under some disadvantages. Most of them had earned their places by criticism, in season and out of sea-

* Les séances officielles de l'Internationale à Paris pendant le siège et pendant la Commune. Lachaud, Paris, 1872.

son, of the powers that were, in respect to acts necessary to the existence of authority, as well as to those incident to the Imperial policy. Having in their several spheres condemned the Empire in all its works and ways and men, they were unable to seek support in what was left of it, and were expected to satisfy the complaints to which they had given voice, to abolish what they had criticised, to establish what they had demanded, in the name of the people. An opposition, which for twenty years had known neither the sweets nor the responsibilities of power, suddenly found itself in charge of Paris and of France, at a moment demanding genius and character of the highest order.

However defective the origin of the new "government," however unfortunate the fact that its members had so long been critics, not administrators, they were in presence of a great occasion, which marked a plain path of duty for them. "There was needed," says M. Leblond, Attorney-General during the siege, "an imposing personality, which had faith in resistance, and that faith was wanting. The population should have been inspired, put under fire, formed into a powerful army, instead of being abandoned to all the perils and dangers of a corrupted city. The city should have been kept in constant communication with its government, told of the difficulties and perils of the situation, and at the same time encouraged to confront them."

Others — M. Vacherot, a Mayor during the siege, for one — insist that Paris should have been treated as a garrisoned town; that the least useful third of the population and all the civilian members of the government should have been sent into the provinces; that martial law should have been enforced, and all newspapers and assemblages violating its rules suppressed; and that food should have been dealt out from the beginning in prevision of the end.

Whichever view be preferred, it is clear that men assuming to constitute a government were bound, by one method or another, to govern, and that men styling themselves the "Government of National Defence" were bound to make the national defence their business at the beginning and until the end, and to subordinate everything else to that, especially political

and personal animosities and aspirations. Their only excuse for taking the helm was that they knew how to steer. Had they termed themselves at the outset what General Trochu terms them in his testimony before the committee, a "government of moral force," or what Colonel Montaignu, Chief of Staff to the National Guard during the siege, terms them, a "government of opinion," or what Mayor Vacherot terms them, one of *laisser-passer, laisser-faire*, they would not have been accepted as pilots at such a crisis: Paris might better have at once delivered her sword and purse to King William; might better have demanded a general from the Jacobins, or a ruler from the Socialists, than have prolonged a resistance, fatally ineffectual and fatally followed by the Commune. Yet such language fitly describes the phantoms that sat in the high places of Paris for five months.

"There was a moment, in my opinion," testifies General Le Flô, Minister of War during the siege, "in which it would have been possible, if not easy, to force the enemy's lines. At any time a dangerous operation, it would on several occasions have presented chances of success. No serious attempt to do this being made, great discontent was produced in the National Guard of Paris, which believed that the hostile lines could have been forced with facility, and which was disgusted by all the military events of the siege. We were, in fact, invariably beaten. I do not know of one *sortie* in which we obtained a substantial advantage."

"Sometimes," testifies M. Cresson (Prefect of Police after October 31), "we were three weeks without news from without": while, according to the testimony of General Trochu, "During the whole siege, and particularly toward the close, hundreds of persons were in constant communication with the enemy, who knew as well as I did everything that took place in Paris. Every day and every night news and newspapers were carried, especially by women, to the Prussians; at all of whose headquarters this *odious* commerce was eagerly encouraged, and regular supplies were received. Among the companies of *franc-tireurs* and other irregular soldiers on the outskirts of Paris, some excellent and devoted, others detestable and given to pillage, how many had communication with the enemy! And

of the newspapers which the Prussians received daily, some from ignorance or folly, others systematically and in order to injure the defence, made known what we were doing! Warnings, the severest measures, appeals to patriotism, were alike ineffectual. Thus, we had constructed at Hautes Bruyères an important work, of which the principal dispositions were modern. The newspapers did not fail to publish all the details with the utmost minuteness."

A Member of the Committee. — "Why did you not order the men who made these revelations to be shot?"

Trochu. — "Ah, yes: that is the great argument, I know, but it is worthless. To shoot, one must be master. Authority must have a sanction other than moral force (the only one at my disposal), — the sanction of brute force, always present and in activity, and that I did not possess. During the whole siege but one man, a marine caught in the act of deserting with arms and baggage to the enemy, was shot. To save the lives of the ten thousand police agents of the Empire, we were obliged to send them to the outposts, where they did good service" (as soldiers, not as they might more usefully have been employed as detectives). "There was no longer a police in Paris."

The guardians of order having been thus disposed of, the guardians of disorder were invited to take their places. The first act of M. de Kératry, who took charge of the Prefecture of Police on the 4th of September, was to order the release of Cluseret; his second act, to instal in his bureau Antoine Dubost, an editor of the *Marseillaise*, and Raoul Rigault, the "delegate to the Ex-prefecture" under the Commune. The latter became chief of the political service, and introduced into the Prefecture the *élite* of the clubs, of the International, of the "Free-Thinker" newspaper. All these gentry remained until October 31st, and a goodly number until March 18th, when they took office under the Commune. After these acts it was certainly in character for Kératry to write the letter which "newspapers of all parties interpreted to mean that the Prefecture of Police was dead." *

Kératry was succeeded by M. Edmond Adam, who continued

* Deposition of M. Mouton, head of a bureau in the Prefecture.

in charge of the remains of the Prefecture from October 10th to November 3d. Guided, doubtless, by Rigault, still chief of the political service, Adam saw "Bonapartist intrigues" in every bush (but could never lay hands upon them), and saw nothing else. "There were no administrative investigations," he testifies; "they were impossible. The National Guard did police duty for itself, after a fashion, and expelled from its ranks all who were expelled"; retaining, however, "beside five or six thousand Blanquists" (or Jacobin conspirators), a large number of convicts, — four or five thousand, according to Adam; double that number in General Trochu's opinion; thirty-five thousand, if we may believe Colonel Montaigu. Knowing these facts, Adam persisted in his fruitless chase of the Imperial eagle until the 31st of October, when the vultures and harpies, who were roosting in the Prefecture, almost succeeded in capturing it and its chief.

Thus during the first two months of the "government of opinion," Paris was even worse off than General Trochu admits. Not content with having "no police," Prefects Log the First and Log the Second opened a preparatory school for Prefect Stork.

These same months witnessed the formation of the National Guard, under circumstances thus set forth in the testimony of General Trochu: "The population, naturally and legitimately excited, demanded arms. Some people believe that it would have been possible to refuse, or at least to furnish arms gradually and to pick men. I should like to have seen those who think so at work. A National Guard of forty thousand men, essentially conservative, organized under the Empire, had to be transformed, without loss of time and in the midst of immense difficulties, not to speak of perils, into a force of two hundred and fifty thousand. How was it possible to arm, clothe, and equip so many soldiers except through the intervention of the Mayors, since the staff, zealous and devoted as it was, did not suffice for the task? The Mayors you know. They had been selected by the Minister of the Interior, M. Gambetta, with the advice of the Mayor of Paris, M. Etienne Arago, and his aids, M. Floquet and others. These men were generally partisans. There were

exceptions ; but, as a whole, they could offer no guaranties of order. If arms had been refused to those who demanded them, they would have been seized sooner or later. What ! your country is invaded, you call the people to arms, and they respond to your appeal ! — is it then that you can dream of distributing guns as in barracks, and of making inquiries as to character, and that, too, in Paris besieged ? ”

This is not the whole story. The worst men, as a rule, got the worst officers. Among the *chefs de bataillon* were Blanqui, Assi, Brunel, Eudes, Vallès, Varlin, Protot, and others equally notorious in the history of the Commune. Five battalions chose Gustave Flourens, who asked General Trochu to let him retain the command of them all. “Trochu,” testifies Colonel Montaigu, “not seeing how to rid himself of this importunate solicitor, who knew nothing — I do not speak of his personal courage — about military affairs except through books, named him Major of the Rampart, and left him in command of the five battalions. This led me to remind General Trochu of the history of Lamartine and Blanqui, the famous lightning-rod of 1848.”

The troops of Major Flourens were presented with banners on the part of the government by M. Jules Ferry, but refused to march unless furnished with *chassepots*. These the “government” gave them without a murmur, while the good citizens who formed the National Guard in the Faubourgs St. Honoré and St. Germain were provided with inferior weapons. At last the Major led his men outside of the walls ; but “on their return,” testifies M. Cresson, subsequently Prefect of Police, “they shouted, after taking their brandy, ‘It is not for us to march out ; our business is in Paris, not against the Prussians.’ ” And to this business they kept, until enabled by the civil war, on the first day of which Flourens bravely fell, to use their *chassepots* against their countrymen.

The treatment of Flourens was not exceptional. In the words of M. Ossude, whose duty it was to clothe, pay, and arm a number of battalions, “The passages of the Hôtel de Ville presented during the siege a strange spectacle. Chiefs were there, whose election I could never comprehend, half clothed, with shirts unbuttoned, loudly demanding arms and uniforms, which they promptly received, while deserving men went with-

out. Nothing was ever refused to those who came from Belleville, La Villette, or Montmartre. The pay-roll was fictitious, captains frequently drawing pay for fifteen hundred men when they were unable to muster eight hundred."

Good citizens, who thankfully accepted any arms they could get, returned unused cartridges; bad citizens hoarded theirs for the time that was coming. Good and bad alike, in or out of active service, were paid thirty sous each, and their wives, right-handed or left-handed, half that amount. Rations not being supplied, and spirits being cheaper and more accessible than food, alcoholization became almost as common as it was under the Commune. Many, who contracted no worse habits than those of idleness, were ready to follow any leaders who would pay them for marching about the streets.

The "government of moral force" which could, after this fashion, equip and pay the citizen soldiers, proved utterly incompetent to discipline them or to lead them to battle. So far from making an army out of material no worse than the ordinary stuff of war, it did not use the best battalions. It allowed patriotic ardor to exhale in empty bravado, and sham patriotic ardor to be used by demagogues: and it fed both the pure and the impure flame with bulletins of victories that had not been gained, of movements that had not been and were not to be executed, of alliances that there was no reasonable expectation of concluding.

"The military operations," says General Le Flô, whose testimony on these points is confirmed by numerous competent witnesses, "had left an extremely painful impression upon the Parisians, and especially upon the National Guard, which numbered 250,000 men more or less disposed to fight; and certainly manifesting a great desire to do so. I believe that the National Guard might have been employed more seriously and to better purpose, that it would have made excellent material of war, and that therefore its non-employment was a great mistake. I know that an attempt to employ it was finally made, but this was done with a bad grace and in a manner hardly serious, almost derisive. For example, in some of our *sorties*, fifty, sixty, eighty battalions were held in reserve, and never fired a shot. In a political point of view this was a blunder, in a mili-

tary point of view a still greater one. In this way was accumulated a stock of hatred in the ranks of the National Guard." The same witness affirms that Trochu would have employed the Guard but for the opposition of General Ducrot. Since, however, Ducrot was but a subaltern, while Trochu was President of the "government," the responsibility must rest upon him and his colleagues.

Up to October 31st, "the National Guard," testifies Prefect Adam, "and the population of Paris, were favorable to the Government of National Defence. On that day the news that 'Le Bourget' was a defeat, not the victory officially announced; that Metz had surrendered; and that an armistice was in contemplation, emboldened Blanqui and Flourens to attempt the *coup de main* which put them in possession of the Hotel de Ville and of the majority of the government." The fact that a single battalion would have been sufficient to prevent a catastrophe equally disgraceful and ridiculous, shows how completely these 4th of September babes in the wood relied upon "moral force" for their own protection as well as for the preservation of public order, if not also for the overthrow of the German "barbarians." This time the captured government was delivered, partly by a fraction of the National Guard, whose hostility to Blanqui and Flourens made them fly to the rescue; partly by a column of *Mobiles* from Brittany, who, not understanding French, could not be tampered with; partly by an undignified back-stairs retreat; and partly by a compromise to which the Mayor of Paris (Arago), the Minister of Justice (Dorian), and perhaps also Prefect Adam, were parties.

Had the insurgents been stronger, or had they put forth more energy, they might have thrown their captives into prison, and perhaps succeeded in keeping them there; but it is not probable that they could have hoisted their true colors even then. On this point Jules Favre is a trustworthy witness. "I observed nothing threatening," says he, "till October 31st, and then nothing indicative of a settled plan. I passed the night in listening to the insurgents. The scene was curiously picturesque, but unimportant from a social or political point of view. Nobody was preoccupied by a system or an idea. A political conspiracy may have existed at this time better organized than

I thought, but in my opinion it had no social color. I believe that the conspiracy of that day aimed at the overthrow of the 'Government of National Defence,' as being powerless, inert, and incapable of fulfilling its mission, which was to defend the country and establish a republic. . . . *At this time, in my judgment, the general causes to which the revolution of March 18th is attributable were developed.*"

This "picturesque scene" led the "Government of the National Defence" to submit the question of its right to exist to the people of Paris, who sustained it by an overwhelming majority.

The next day Paris chose twenty Mayors for its twenty wards, and the third day sixty Assistant Mayors. The character of these Mayors is pronounced by General Trochu "much better" than that of Gambetta's appointees, — a humiliating admission in view of the fact that among the elected were Delescluze, the old Jacobin, the master spirit of the Commune in its last and most desperate days; Ranvier, who served in the Committee of Public Safety, and conducted its assassinations; and Mottu, now in prison for fraudulent bankruptcy.

"The Mayors of Paris," testifies M. Choppin (who held a confidential position in the police from this time to February 10th, and was at its head during the ensuing month), "though legally functionaries of limited powers, being only officers *de l'état civil*" (that is, concerned with the registration of births, marriages, and deaths), "and presidents of bureaus of charity, believed themselves good at everything, and issued orders right and left. M. Bonvalet, formerly keeper of an eating-house, made a body of laws, and issued many orders beginning thus: 'Having consulted our council of legislation.' M. Mottu did the same. M. Bonvalet decreed obligatory instruction, and sent his National Guards to arrest boys and girls who would not go to school. M. Mottu tore crucifixes from the ambulances, and forbade priests to visit the sick. Both were governed by their assistants, who were members of the International, and exercised great influence," as did assistant Dereure, also of the International, in Montmartre.

Other Mayors used their authority to better purpose, but "all of us," testifies M. Corbon, "finally became each in his own

ward a complete government. The action of the central power was not felt even in matters connected with the defence of the city. Obligated to provide for everything, and, above all, to hide the short-comings of the government from the eyes of the people, we necessarily became political functionaries. . . . The Assistant Mayors were universally worse than their chiefs, because chosen on the third day of the elections, when voters were tired, and few went to the polls except those who, like the participants in the affair of October 31st, had a selfish purpose to serve." The assistants thus chosen cast three votes in the Municipal Council to the Mayor's one.

The Mayors elected on the 31st of October had the further disadvantage of inheriting from their predecessors committees of vigilance, of armament, of equipment, of science, of hygiene, of education. At a loss what to do with these self-constituted powers, Mayors Vacherot and Dubail asked advice of the *soi-disant* government. "Don't provoke them," was the answer.

The night of October 31st led to one change for the better. M. Adam was succeeded in the Prefecture of Police by a man. "My appointment," testifies M. Cresson, "is to-day [July 4, 1871] an enigma to me. Chance made me Prefect of Police." He was to have dined October 31st with M. Picard, Minister of Finance, who had just escaped from the insurgents, leaving his colleagues in their hands. Cresson's activity in carrying out Picard's orders for the protection of public buildings, and in rallying the National Guard, commended him to the "government," which had at last discovered the necessity of a police. "As soon as I learned that it was proposed to make me Prefect, I protested, insisting that the place did not suit my character, tastes, or profession (the law), that I had a wife and four children, that there would be cutting of throats sooner or later, and that the appointment was a sentence of death. I was told it was a duty not to be declined under existing circumstances. Finally I consented, on condition that I might recall to Paris twelve hundred policemen, arm them with *chasse-pots*, and reconstitute the force which I considered necessary to the existence of society. I called together the men in the Prefecture on whom I could depend, — MM. Ansart, Marseille, Lecour, Baube, — all relics of the Imperial administration.

I selected twenty-two commissaries of police, of whom twenty belonged to the old force, and I proceeded to make arrests."

By means of the secret service, which M. Cresson re-established, he was enabled to keep an eye on the clubs, the National Guard, meetings, public and private, and secret societies. In the latter part of November he denounced the International as the association most to be dreaded; whereupon M. Jules Ferry declared that the International "had no political power, designs, or intentions; that it was composed of honest men, whom he personally knew, and whose advocate he had been." This declaration, coupled with the refusal of the government to apply the law of 1819, repressing press offences, even to "obscene engravings masked under a political form," led M. Cresson to take his hat, with the indignant remark, "I see you have no need of a Prefect of Police, — I resign." Permission having finally been granted to execute the law of 1819, and Jules Favre uniting with General Trochu to urge him to remain, he consented.

M. Cresson's intimacy with Jules Favre and Picard, and his "real veneration," to use his own expression, for the patriotic sentiments and the energy of General Trochu, give his testimony the greater weight where it is against the government he faithfully tried to serve. During the three months he remained in office, he compassed the arrest of a large number of those who subsequently became leaders of the insurrection, but was unable to secure the trial of one until the end of the siege, when almost all were acquitted. Félix Pyat, literary assassin, and Delescluze, professional conspirator, had friends at court who begged the Prefect to pity the sorrows of these "poor old men." A plan for Pyat's release was devised, that all but succeeded; leave to arrest Delescluze was refused until the fifth application; and Rigault, who had at length been chased from the bureau of political service, could never be taken, being under the protection of "one of these gentlemen," as a cautious witness puts it. Others were let out of prison on their parole for a day or two at a time; Ranvier, for example, who went from his cell to a Belleville club, where he said, "They have not the courage to shoot us: when our time comes we shall have the courage. We will shoot them!" And he kept his word.

The necessary powers to arrest the leaders of the International were at last granted, but not until the opportunity was gone. Time after time, M. Cresson asked permission to enforce martial law, to shut the clubs, and to stop revolutionary publications. Authority was denied him until January 22d, two days before the armistice; the uniform answer to his requests being "that he had done his duty, but that the government could not give orders which it was impossible to execute." Impossible in December, because during September and October there had been no police, because Belleville had become a citadel which an agent of the law entered at the peril of his life, and because the twenty wards had at least twenty independent rulers. "The Prefecture of Police," says M. Choppin, "was an instrument of information rather than of action. Its bad organization was one of the principal causes of the insurrection." If, as happened in these latter days, a newspaper was suppressed, a worse one sprang from its ashes. If a commissary of police ordered the dissolution of a public meeting, he had no force wherewith to execute his order. Criminals were safer in the streets than officers of justice, whose melancholy duty it was to follow, step by step, day by day, and night by night, those who afterwards constituted the army of insurrection. In the performance of their duties to public order, morals, decency, cleanliness, health, so far from being aided by the courts or the "government," they were "constantly shackled by them."

Whatever advantages the "government" of September 4th may have gained after October 31st in the popular sanction, the improved character of its subordinates, and the superior energy of the police, it still failed to perform the duties of a government. Persistent feebleness was still its characteristic; persistent falsehood its policy, its substitute for victory.

Upon a people whose patriotic hopes had been poisoned for five months with falsehoods, spoken, printed, acted; which had governed itself as well as a society without governors can reasonably be expected to do, and had cheerfully made sacrifices to what it believed to be the country's cause, upon a scale and with a unanimity difficult to parallel in history; whose naturally sensitive nerves were strained, whose naturally quick pulse was kept at fever heat, by bad living,

in which adulterated wine bore a large proportion to food, by isolation from all subjects of thought but one, by constant excitement, and by an atmosphere literally filled with gunpowder; whose faith in the powers that pretended to be had borne severe tests with wonderful patience and hopefulness; upon a people, which had been armed, but not used, not allowed to show of what stuff it was made, fell, like a thunderbolt, the announcement that all was over; that the long winter had been a long deception, and that sufferings and privations had only served to make the terms imposed by the conqueror more severe, and the humiliation of France complete. Is it wonderful that the "Government of National Defence" became a National Offence?

"I should place," says Jules Ferry, "among the determining causes of the insurrection, the madness of the siege; that is, a state of mind brought about by a change to habits and a life radically different from the habits, the life, the conduct of our modern society. Five months, during which labor was intermitted and minds were turned toward the war, ended in an immense deception, the entire population falling from the height of the most prodigious illusions ever conceived into a reality which it was unfortunately impossible to disclose to it in advance, — this is what I call the madness of the siege; and I maintain that with the exception of those who possessed by virtue of their position in the government a more exact knowledge of affairs, every Parisian suffered from this mania."

Two provisions of the preliminary treaty aggravated the situation: that providing for the disarmament of the regular troops, and the non-disarmament of the National Guard; and that permitting the Prussians to enter Paris. The latter excited so powerfully the public feeling, that M. Thiers considers it "one of the principal causes of the insurrection. I do not say," he adds, "that without this circumstance the movement would not have occurred, but I maintain that the entrance of the Prussians gave it an extraordinary impulse."

Opinions differ as to whether it would have been possible after the capitulation to disarm the National Guard, with the aid of the soldiers of the line, who would in that case, under the alternative presented by the Germans, have remained under

arms. If impossible, it was rendered so by the inefficiency of the authorities. Had the National Guard been in the habit of receiving regular rations, the exchange of a musket for a day's provisions might have been managed. Such would have been Bismarck's course, had the matter been left to him.

Whatever may have been the perils of the alternative course, those of that adopted were serious. "We were authorized by the terms of the capitulation," says General Le Flô, "to preserve a division of twelve thousand men. I made it fifteen thousand strong by joining to a brigade of infantry a numerous artillery and a regiment of cavalry. General Vinoy remained at the head of these troops. The *Mobiles* and the rest of the army had been disarmed. The troops were permitted — and this was the greatest fault of the capitulation — to remain in Paris. . . . The soldiers lodged in the houses of the inhabitants, with whom they took their soup and passed the evening. It was easy to see that the spirit of the soldier would be perverted. General Vinoy with his fifteen thousand men could not provide against necessities which he had not created."

The situation, to meet which General Vinoy had such insignificant means, grew worse every day. Discharged soldiers of the line swelled the ranks of disorder. Irregular bodies, which had waged a predatory warfare in the district between the hostile lines during the siege; red-shirted, beplumed ruffians, who had covered questionable deeds in Burgundy under the name of Garibaldi; agents of the International Association; socialists of every shade, and adapters of Utopian theories to selfish purposes; soldiers of fortune like Cluseret and La Cecilia, the off-scourings of civilization, jail-birds and revolutionists of all countries, — flocked to the city, which had been abandoned even by "moral force," and furnished contingents to the National Guard.

On the other hand, not less than 140,000 citizens belonging to the better classes left Paris within a fortnight after the armistice. Colonel Montagu testifies that until this exodus he had hoped to keep the National Guard under orders. Believing this to be thenceforward impossible, he resigned from the staff, and induced General Clément Thomas to throw up the command, — examples speedily followed by the best officers.

The natural consequences followed. "A few days after the

armistice," says Jules Favre, "I started at one A.M. from Versailles for Paris. I found no boat at Sèvres: all our posts were withdrawn. The Prussians guarded themselves till the last moment, as if the war were still raging: we, two days after the signature of the armistice, guarded ourselves no longer. On my way, I saw, at intervals of twenty minutes, almost up to the fortifications, a Prussian sentinel; but there was not a single French sentinel on the walls of Paris, — not one! Everybody had gone home. The National Guard was dissolved, and ready to serve anybody who would take possession. This ought to be a lesson to us. It is not in the nature of society not to be governed. The National Guard required chiefs, and it found them. General Aurelle de Paladines was sent too late; he did not know Paris; he had not the necessary instruments in his hands; and I would defy Catinat or Turenne to command an army which had no officers. The general could only hold discussions with the Mayors, who deceived him as much as they could."

The lesson learned by Jules Favre on that night journey, six months too late for service, was familiar to the men who took charge of the National Guard, when thus left to itself. During the interval between the departure of General Thomas and the arrival of General Paladines, the Central Committee — composed of delegates named in some districts by the Family Council existing in each battalion for social and benevolent purposes, in others by the committees of vigilance and armament already described; "composed," in the language of M. Ansart, chief of the municipal police, "of all the elements existing in the ranks" — had ample time to confirm and extend its authority. Possessing no clearly determined political physiognomy, it served as a flag, representing the federation of the National Guard, around which rallied discontented parties, however diverse their opinions and interests."

The Central Committee appeared openly on the scene before the entry of the Prussians into Paris. Its hand is visible in seizures of cannon and cartridges, insults offered to officers of the line, and mutinies fomented among the soldiers; in manifestations under the red flag at the Place de la Bastille; in isolated acts of cruelty and pillage; in the menacing tone of

newspapers and clubs, as well as in the misconduct of the National Guard. Jacobins and Socialists stood aside for a time, or guided, without seeming to guide, these obscure individuals, who were blindly obeyed, and by whose instrumentality the revolution accomplished itself.

The testimony of General Vinoy, including his journal from January 22d, when he took command of the troops, till March 18th, and that of MM. Cresson and Choppin, enable one to follow the insurrection, district by district. They show how skilfully its leaders threw the responsibility of civil war on their opponents, managing matters somewhat after the fashion adopted by the Southern leaders during the latter months of Mr. Buchanan's Presidency; how anxious, on the other hand, many of the "friends of order" were to avoid the "effusion of blood"; and how little encouragement to stand firm men of sterner stuff received from Bordeaux during these trying weeks, — facts to be taken into consideration by those who blame anybody for passively accepting the revolutionary rule.

The National Assembly, far from taking measures to improve matters at Paris, made them worse. Its monarchical tendencies alienated good republicans, who had no sympathy with the revolutionary chieftains. Its enforced haste to do the will of the enemy, by ratifying a humiliating treaty, was indignantly contrasted by the Parisians with its failure to grant municipal liberties, its refusal to sit in the metropolis, its inability to forget partisanship in patriotism.

Tenants and debtors, who were staggering under burdens thrown upon them by the war, received no assistance from the Assembly. "At the end of the siege," testifies M. Bethmont, "everybody was, so to speak, in bankruptcy; nobody could pay his rent. . . . The laws passed by the Assembly left in the condition of bankruptcy all those who, by position, habit, or instinct, are men of order, so that, when the 18th of March arrived, it was impossible to hope that the shop-keepers would take arms against disorder." "Many of the small manufacturers," says M. Choppin, "who work in their chambers alone, or with one or two men, suffered much during the siege, lived on their small savings, and were ruined, because they would not have recourse to public charity. As National Guards, they re-

ceived thirty sous a day, but that sum was not enough to support them and their families. When they found themselves in face of rents and of debts that they were unable to pay, they joined the insurgents, not thinking it worth their while to defend themselves."

Through various channels Thiers learned enough about Paris to render him uneasy, to decide him in favor of Versailles as the seat of government, and to induce the adoption of a plan which might test the feeling of both troops and population. Several attempts amicably to get possession of certain cannon held by the National Guard having miscarried, through want of tact on the one side, or want of good faith on the other, it was finally decided to seize them on the morning of the memorable 18th of March.

The causes of failure are given in the testimony of General Le Flô. "The troops possessed themselves of the heights of Montmartre at about six o'clock, and had nothing more to do but to carry away the pieces. Unhappily the horses and gun-carriages did not arrive till eight o'clock, by which hour the population were awake. Had the horses arrived at six, the troops would have been able to retire with the cannon without serious inconvenience. Other causes of failure were the lack of precision in the orders given, and the grave fault of leaving in the barracks the *sacs*" (with the food and extra clothing they contained).

"The soldiers," pursues General Le Flô, "having taken possession of the heights and the cannon, waited for the horses. During this period the population streamed out of the houses. Women, children, and old people approached the soldiers, crying, 'Long live the line! we will not fight each other, we are brothers.' Gradually the crowd closed in, and our men were surrounded. They were supplied with plenty to drink, and presently their arms were taken away, they opposing slight resistance. The trick, as Ledru Rollin said with reference to a similar occasion, was executed with great rapidity."

The failure of this expedition sealed the fate of Paris. The scene at Montmartre was reproduced at Belleville and elsewhere; and it became evident, by six o'clock in the evening, that no reliance could be placed on the troops. Hours before, Thiers

had gone to Versailles, after ordering the evacuation of Paris. This step was opposed by MM. Jules Favre, Picard, Jules Simon and others, on political grounds, but the military officers had but one opinion. "I agreed," says General Le Flô, "that from a political point of view the evacuation would have grave inconveniences, but I looked at the military question, and my fixed conviction was, that if we remained twenty-four hours longer in Paris, we should be unable to control a single regiment."

The decision to evacuate the city was probably wise, but it was carried out with undignified precipitation. Three regiments and six batteries were forgotten; all the forts were abandoned except Mont Valérien, and that narrowly escaped falling into the hands of the Commune, in which case the insurgents might have prevailed.

Henceforward the national authority was unrepresented in the national capital. The only civil authorities remaining were the Mayors, with their assistants, who were too numerous and too divided in opinion for efficient action. Thiers and Picard had given them general powers, and had, at their instance, appointed Colonel Langlois, and on his refusal, Admiral Saisset, commander of the National Guard. Idle ceremony! The Guard was under orders already; and Saisset, after issuing several contradictory proclamations, and vainly trying to stop the demonstration of the "friends of order," which resulted in the massacre of the Place Vendôme, retired to Versailles. For eight days negotiations went on between the Central Committee and the Mayors, of whom some were in secret league with the Committee, some heartily in sympathy with Versailles, and some halting between two opinions. Several agreements were made, fixing the time for municipal elections. Each agreement was broken by the Central Committee, which finally imposed what several witnesses call the "Capitulation of the Mayors," whereby those who signed it surrendered Paris to the insurgents.

Is not the statement justified, that, upon the men who formed themselves on the 4th of September into what they complacently termed a "government," presses a heavy responsibility for the insurrection of March 18th? If Jacobins and Socialists sowed the seed, it was these men who watered it, and gave it increase. It was their fault that the teeth of the dragon of

1793 started up as armed men ; and it was they who put money into the purse, and rallied thousands under the banner of the International. Without faith in themselves or their cause, they could not be expected to inspire others with faith ; but it was unnecessary for them to lie as they did, to save their lives at the cost of honor, or to demand sacrifices which they knew to be useless. The evil that they did lived after them, in the demoralization of the National Guard and of the regular army, in the blunders of the National Assembly, in the pusillanimity of the Mayors, whose capitulation they should have signed, since it was their work.

A. S. HILL.

ART. V. — BJÖRNSTJERNE BJÖRNSEN AS A DRAMATIST.

“IN the childhood of time,” says the Danish poet Hauch, “the bard always came after the hero, and Mnemosyne, Memory, as the ancient Greeks have expressed it, was the mother of the Muses.” In other words, the age of great political events is not the age of song ; but in the calm that follows the storm, the poet will lift up his voice and will be sure to be heard. In the beginning of this century Norway’s political greatness had long been a thing of the past. The lurid sun of St. Olaf’s, Haken Hakenson’s, and the Viking age had set in bloody splendor, and the nation slept like a bear in his winter den. And like the bear it may be said to have “sucked its paw,” to have fed on the great memories of its heroic past, gloomily regardless of the dreary emptiness of the present. But it could not long remain thus. When the war-shouts of Napoleon’s armies and the general rising of European nations after his downfall had roused the Norseman from his slumber, and awakened him to a keen consciousness of the unworthiness of his present condition, he felt again the old Viking blood flowing in his veins ; he rubbed his drowsy eyes, stretched his athletic frame, and with one bold, well-directed blow crushed the shackles of foreign despotism. On the 17th of May, 1814, delegates from all the districts of Norway met at Eidsvald, wrought out a new constitution, declared themselves a